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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the reasons for and the means of providing public library service to business and industry. It discusses the organization of a business and industry service, staff qualifications and training, and the composition of the collection. The importance of studies and surveys to determine the information and service needs of the economic community is stressed. Reference and other special services are described, as are ways of publicizing the service, including library publications and personal contacts between staff members and the public. Library cooperative agreements and user fees are suggested as ways to reduce and defray the costs of this expensive service. An appendix lists improvements in public libraries suggested by members of the economic community in a market analysis of business and industry information needs, as reported by Robert S. Meyer and Gerhard N. Rostvolt in "The Library and The Economic Community," published in 1969. A 17-item bibliography concludes the paper. (ESR)

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PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE TO BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

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A PROFESSIONAL PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

BY

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DECEMBER, 1982

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PREFACE

This paper resulted from questions raised in the mind of the writer when the librarian of an advertising firm stated she didn't like to wait in line for help at the public library.

"What does she expect," the writer wondered, "some kind of special service?" This led to an investigation of what services public libraries should provide to business and industry.

The questions this paper attempts to answer are: How much service should public libraries provide to business and industry? and How can they best go about providing this service? The paper is concerned not only with large public libraries, but also with small and medium-sized public libraries.

The writer believes this subject to be pertinent today because public libraries are having to reconsider their programs and services in the light of current fiscal restraints. Also, in the Sun Belt, where population is increasing, new libraries are being established and others are growing larger along with their communities. These libraries must decide what programs and services to offer.

CHAPTER I

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE TO BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY: WHY AND HOW MUCH?

Should public libraries make a special effort to serve business and industry, thereby using public funds to support profit-seeking enterprises?

Since the turn of the century, when public libraries began establishing special departments and branches to serve business and industry, the answer has been "yes." Those libraries were already recognizing that it is the function of the public library to meet the unique informational needs of its own constituency. Thus, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh in 1895 established a science and technology reading room to provide "a technical and scientific collection commensurate with the greatest manufacturing center in the U.S."[1] In 1902 the reading room became a separate department. In 1900 the Providence Public Library created Art and Industrial Departments to serve the locally predominant art-in-industry and machine tool occupations.[2]

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[1]Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, First Annual Report to the Board of Trustees . . . to Jan. 31, 1894, quoted in Daniel R. Pfoutz and Jackson B. Cohen, "Service to Industry by Public Libraries," Library Trends 14 (January 1966): 235.

[2]Joseph L. Wheeler and Herbert Goldhor, Practical

John Cotton Dana, realizing that special collections and special techniques were needed to serve the businessmen of the city, established the first business library in the country in 1904 in Newark, New Jersey. This became the "Business Men's Branch" of the Newark Public Library in 1907.

The idea of public library service to business and industry is well established today. As Raymond M. Holt stated in Focusing Library Services on the Economic Community, "the 'economic community' composed of those engaged in business and industry, has long been recognized as a legitimate part of the public library's multifaceted 'public.'"[1]

This service benefits not only companies and firms, but also all the men and women who work in business and industry. "Business library service is only the adjustment of service to adults to provide information in relation to their income needs."[2] It aids workers who want to improve

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Administration of Public Libraries, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 338.

[1](Del Mar, California: Raymond M. Holt and Associates, 1971), p. i.

[2]Marian C. Manley, Library Service to Business: Its Place in the Small City, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1946), p. 8.

skills in order to advance in their fields, and the unemployed seeking information to help them find work.

The question, then, is not should public libraries serve business and industry, but to what extent should they do so? The problem is this service is extremely expensive because the materials, staff time, and staff training required are costly, and public libraries all over the country are currently experiencing funding cuts. As Elizabeth M. Walkey, coordinator of Business Information Services, Milwaukee Public Library, says, "a budget already stretched to capacity cannot provide exotic (meaning expensive as well as innovative) reference tools, nor will it permit new hires, or extensive training of present staff."[1]

Furthermore, other members of the community are in competition for the library's limited resources. The needs of such groups as the aged, handicapped, institutionalized, minorities, and ethnic groups are currently receiving considerable attention.

There are a number of arguments for making special efforts to serve the economic community in spite of the cost:

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[1]Elizabeth M. Walkey, "The Making of . . . a Business Information Service," Wisconsin Library Bulletin 71 (May-June 1975): 126.

First, a large percentage of the taxes that support the library's budget are paid by businesses and industries. They have a right to expect a return on their investment.

Second, services that help the economic community benefit the whole community. According to Wheeler and Goldhor:

> . . . the librarian and the trustee need to consider whether to justify added costs for what many regard as their most significant service to the community. A well-administered, community-focused technical and business department, for example, may have a stimulating influence on local industry and trade. If its services could be measured for dollar value to each patron, it could be proved in many cities that the benefit far exceeds the cost."[1]

Third, business and industry must have a great deal of information for planning, producing, and distributing their goods and services. Even companies with special libraries are unable to meet all of their own informational needs.

And fourth, business and industry are an important source of support for public libraries. They have frequently been generous with gifts of money and materials to libraries that serve them. They are also often willing to cooperate with libraries in meeting tne educational needs of their communities. For example, representatives of three major companies recently taught and provided texts for

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[1]Wheeler and Goldhor, p. 343.

classes in "Introduction to Computer Systems" at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Business Branch.[1]

Perhaps the most important kind of support they can offer today is support for the very existence of the public library and its budget. Representatives of the economic sector who receive useful services from the public library will be more likely to recognize its value. They are often powerful members of the community, and their support can be extremely important to the library.

With the above points in mind, how does a public library decide how much of its resources to devote to serving business and industry? The decision can only be made on the basis of a study of the library's own community. The study must determine the following: What proportion of the community as a whole do business and industry constitute? What are their information needs? Can these needs be met by any other source? This information must be weighed against the determined needs of other segments of the community. Only after these questions have been answered can a public library decide to what extent it can provide service to business and industry.

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[1]Eileen Grosh, "Idea Exchange," Pennsylvania Library Association Bulletin 32 (September 1977): 116.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATION OF THE SERVICE

Public libraries have organized their services to business and industry in a number of different ways. Some serve industry through a separate science/technology department. Business may be served by a business, business and economics, or social sciences department. A business branch may be set up in a separate building in the heart of the business district.

In recent years a number of public libraries have consolidated the subject areas of business and technology into one unit. The Chicago Public Library, for example, did this when it created its new Business and Industry Division in 1975.

Other public libraries have established a business or business and industry "information service". Such a title makes it obvious that the emphasis is on service, rather than on a collection of materials.

It is not necessary for public libraries to have separate branches or departments in order to serve business and industry. As Manley says, "public library service to business may be given whenever anyone thinks of turning to the library for the answer to any business question. The

question may be simple or complex, but as long as the librarian finds the answer, or makes the contact by which the businessman gets his answer, that library is giving business service."[1]

Although it is possible to handle business and industry inquiries through the general reference desk, a public library that has decided to make a special effort to serve business and industry should try to establish a separate and identified service or division for this purpose. The service's staff could then devote all its time to serving business and industry without distraction. Giving the service a special title would facilitate its identification by the public--and its publicity efforts.

Business and industry services can also be organized through a cooperative arrangement with other libraries, thus making it possible for small and suburban libraries to serve business and industry more effectively. According to Beth Hamilton of the Illinois Regional Library Council, "the idea of reaching business people out in the suburbs makes sense because a big potential clientele is growing in suburban areas."[2]

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[1]Manley, p. 6.

[2]"Serving Business & Gov't:Studies in Illinois," Library Journal 99 (September 1974): 2027.

If possible, a separate room of the library should be set aside for business and industry services. Robert S. Meyer and Gerhard N. Rostvolt state:

> The purpose of such a room would be to create an environment that would be especially conductive to serving the businessman. The staff, collection, and equipment that he requires would be present and readily available. The staff would be able to concentrate and specialize on serving the businessman alone, and would not be distracted by other demands. The user himself will welcome relatively uncrowded reader facilities that are designed with him in mind, and which are not occupied by other kinds of users who distract his attention or prevent him from using the facilities effectively.
>
> Attention should also be given to the intangible item of "atmosphere." The facilities should reflect the kind of environment the businessman wants: quite, efficient, businesslike, speedy, and competent, yet pleasant and attractive.[1]

If a separate room is not available, the next best solution is to set aside a special section of the library for this purpose.

Besides being more convenient for users, there is another reason for housing business and industry materials in a separate area of the library: conventional book classification schemes are unsatisfactory for the arrangement of many business materials. For quick and convenient service, it is better to separate such materials by physical form--dictionaries, company services, clippings, gazetteers, etc. A simple and easily understood arrangement makes it easy for

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[1] The Library and the Economic Community (Walnut Creek, CA, 1969), p. 88.

users to browse the shelves by themselves. Signs can help them find the materials they need without having to consult staff members.

Subject classifications included in the business and industry collection might be similar to those the Pasadena Public Library chose for its Business and Industry Division. They were: statistics, economics, business law, insurance, commerce, physical science, applied science, engineering, and business and technology.[1]

In a small to medium-sized library, the staff of the business and industry section may consist of one professional librarian. In a large library, the staff may include a number of professionals and non-professionals. Aileen Tufts, head of the Business and Economics Division, Vancouver Pub-Library, Vancouver, British Columbia, states: "A good working proportion of professional to library assistant staff members has been found to be one to three."[2] The policy on which this division of labor is based is: "If the work can be learned through repetition it is not a task for the professional librarian."[3] Of an average of 500 questions

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[1]Holt, p. 45.

[2]"Vancouver Public Library's Business and Economics Division," Canadian Library Journal 34 (April 1977): 89.

[3]Ibid.

answered daily in the Business and Economic Divisions, about two-thirds are answered by library assistants.

When business and industry inquiries are handled at the general reference desk, it is desirable to have at least one specialist in business and science/technology on the reference staff.

Being part of a public library has certain benefits and disadvantages for business and industry service that other special libraries that are not part of a public library system do not have. One benefit is the availability of resources and staff expertise in other subject areas, since the information needs of the economic community often extend into those areas also.

Another benefit is that acquisitions, cataloging, and processing chores are performed by other library departments, leaving the business and industry staff free to devote all its time to public service. A drawback to this, however, is that those departments do not always understand the extreme importance of up-to-dateness in business and industry materials. In this case, according to A. Leslie Smyth,

> pressure must be exerted on the appropriate departmemts . . . . this requires continual personal involvement and a large measure of diplomacy. It is advantageous to get staff in support departments to take a personal interest in the business library and make them aware of the importance of their particular

job to the service provided."[1]

1"Organization and Administration: Objectives Planning and Staffing," in A Manual of Business Library Practice, ed. Malcolm J. Campbell (London: Clive Bingley, 1975; Hamden, CT: Linnet, 1975), p. 35.

CHAPTER III

THE STAFF: QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Of all the components of public library service to business and industry, the staff is the most important, for it is the staff that provides the service. Therefore, the chief attribute staff members should have is a sincere interest in the provision of service.

Such an interest may be lacking if staff members are uncertain it is the function of the public library to serve business and industry in the first place. However, if the library has conducted a study of the information needs of the economic community and made a real commitment to meet those needs, this is not likely to be a problem.

Other qualifications professional staff members need include: a background knowledge of the fields involved, familiarity with the materials of those fields, well-developed reference skills, and a knowledge of outside-of-the library sources of information. An acquaintance with public relations and publicity techniques would also be helpful.

Such a combination of skill and knowledge is rarely available in a new employee, but must be acquired through experience. According to Smyth, "the actual skills of

business information work can only be learnt on the job itself."[1]

Few librarians have formal education in the fields of business or science/technology. This hinders both the selection of appropriate materials for the collection, and the provision of service. Smyth states that although it is not possible to answer questions completely in many business subjects without knowing something about those subjects, business education in library schools is presently inadequate.[2] Pfoutz and Cohen point out that although

> the overwhelming majority of American scientific personnel is composed of engineers . . . it is probable that it is in engineering, mathematics, and physics that the fewest number of public librarians with science training have degrees. Studies of the way scientists and engineers use scientific and technical literature, moreover, show that it is the engineers and other applied scientists who know least about information resources in their fields and who need and want the most help in utilizing them.[3]

Fortunately, it is possible to obtain background subject knowledge through on-the-job training and individual initiative. Those methods can also be used to acquire and improve other needed knowledges and skills.

Ways of using individual initiative for these purposes include reading the subject literature, careful study

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[1]Campbell, p. 45.

[2]Ibid., p. 44.

[3]Pfoutz and Cohen, p. 249-250.

of reference sources in the field, and conversations with informed users of the library. The novice can begin reading encyclopedias and textbooks, and then move on to more advanced materials.

Although on-the-job training in a small public library may simply be a matter of gaining work experience, many larger libraries are able to offer more formal in-service training programs. Manley states that the principal factors of in-service training are "examination and discussion." Specific magazines and special studies are assigned to different members of the staff for careful examination. Reports are then made at staff meetings on ways in which information in these publications applies to the particular community. Local companies can also be studied through the city and trade directories. If a major industry dominates the town, its ramifications can be followed through investment services, directories, and magazines.[1]

Another type of training program uses orientation reference exercises. The Cleveland Public Library's Business Information Department employs exercises in which the trainee answers given questions from the more used business information sources. The answers must be found without

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[1]Manley, p. 11-12.

help, but a supervisor goes over them afterwards, assisting with any problems and pointing out some of the more specialized, comprehensive or alternative sources not specified in the exercize.[1]

The simplest type of in-service training involves consultation with a senior staff member whenever problems arise.

Libraries too small to provide their own training programs can set them up as part of a cooperative program with other libraries, or through the state library agency.

After background knowledge and skills needed for the job have been acquired, the staff member's education does not end. He or she must keep abreast of new developments in business and science/technology, and learn the skills required to utilize new computer technologies now being employed in libraries.

The business and industry librarian cannot remain ensconced in the library either, but must spend a great deal of time out in the community explaining library services to the economic community and receiving input on what that community wants from the library.

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[1]Campbell, p. 44-45.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEYS, MATERIALS, AND SERVICES

Before a public library attempts to serve the local economic community, it should first study the businesses and industries within that community in order to determine the kinds of materials and services they require.

The study can begin with printed materials, such as city and trade directories. A clipping file of newspaper and magazine articles about local businesses and industries and economic conditions can contribute to the study. The Chamber of Commerce is another possible source of information.

The best way to determine what members of the economic community want and need from the public library is to ask them. This can be done by conducting interviews with, and sending questionnaires to, representative businessmen.

An additional way to gain input on what the library can do for business and industry is through personal contacts between the staff and members of the economic community. This includes contacts made when businessmen use the library, or through the library's public relations or publicity efforts.

Study of the economic community should be an ongoing

activity. Meyer and Rostvolt suggest that the head of the library service for business and industry try to perform at least one new interview each day.[1]

Studying the economic community has an added dividend: it provides good public relations and publicity for the library. According to Meyer and Rostvolt:

> There are many "fringe benefits" to be gained from user studies, the primary one being an increased awareness on the part of the respondent, of the services and facilities that are already existing and available to him. Another extra benefit is in the field of public relations - the respondent's appreciation for the librarian's desire and willingness to solicit his opinions about the library. Such appreciation can well result in greater community support for the library's programs in the future.[2]

One of the most exhaustive studies ever done of the use and users of public library service to business and industry was the Meyer-Rostvolt market analysis of the information needs of business and industry in two medium-sized California communities. As Meyer and Rostvolt themselves say, many of the study findings might well be relevant to other areas as well. But they cannot replace a community's own market survey for planning (and later evaluating) its library service.[3]

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[1]The Library and the Economic Community (Walnut Creek, CA, 1969), p. 14.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 131.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note some of the findings of the Meyer-Rostvolt study. Members of the economic community were asked how they would like the public library to improve its services to them. The response was as follows: first, improve the collection; second, increase publicity of library resources that might be of assistance; third, offer a variety of reference and other special services to help exploit those resources most effectively.[1]

(For more details about the above suggestions for improvements in public library services, see the Appendix.)

The Collection

As noted in Chapter I, the information needs of business and industry are so extensive that it is impossible for even the largest company library to provide all the information needed by its parent firm.

"With very little imagination, one could make a case for the potential use some time, some place, of every bit of recorded information by one or another segment of the industrial community."[2] This is because companies need

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[1] Ibid., p. 73.

[2] Winifred Sewell, "The Needs of Industry for Library Services Beyond that Expected of their Own Special Libraries and Resources Available to Them," Library Trends 14 (January 1966): 227.

information for such diverse purposes as advertising, marketing, and speechwriting.

Even in the core area of information concerned with a firm's own product, a company library cannot possibly collect all available knowledge, and must call upon outside sources of information. Smaller businesses and industrial concerns without their own libraries are almost entirely depended upon outside sources.

Public libraries can prove their value to the economic community by serving as this outside source of information. They are the logical choice to fill this role since they can provide a diversity of information and their function is to serve the community. Other institutions, such as college and university libraries, are committed first to serving their own constituencies.

Yet collection inadequacy is one of the major reasons members of the economic community fail to use public libraries for business-oriented purposes, according to Holt, and improvement of the collection was the most frequently cited "suggestion for improvement" in the Meyer-Rostvolt survey.[1]

How does a public library decide what materials to add to its collection to best serve business and industry?

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[1]Holt, p. 20.

The selection of materials must be based first upon the needs of local businesses and industries, and these can only be determined by studying the local economic community. The kinds of materials needed will vary according to the types of firms that exist in the community.

Sewell suggests an additional guideline to follow in determining the kind of information an industry is most likely to need from the public library: "Industry is least likely to need materials which it actually has in its own organization, and can be expected to be most likely to need materials closely related to what it collects, but cannot justify buying for itself."[1]

In other words, a business or industry must collect highly specialized materials related to its own products or services, and public libraries should collect more general materials that may be used infrequently by individual companies, but often by business and industry as a whole.

Other ideas for what should be included in the collection can be suggested by specialized literature guides, such as Business Information Sources, by Lorna M. Daniells.[2]

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[1] Sewell, p. 227.

[2] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976; Paris: Center for Business Information, 1976), 439 p.

Responsible and representative users may also be consulted for their recommendations.

The major portion of the collection should consist of serials. Pfoutz and Cohen state that

> the most important single resource of any science and technical department, which determines its ability to provide adequate service to industry, is its serial collection. We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of periodicals and serials . . .[1]

Serials, especially journals and newspapers, are valuable to business also, because they help keep the collection up-to-date. Business collections must be as current as possible to keep up with rapidly changing business conditions.

The serials collection should include as many as possible of the periodicals indexed in the more prevalent indexes of the fields involved, such as the Business Periodicals Index and Applied Science and Technology Index.

Because most firms lack the space for it, libraries can provide a valuable service by retaining back issues of journals. Holt suggests that journals be retained on a selective basis, using reliable advice from experienced users as the basis for selection.[2]

After serials, the second most important part of the

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[1]Pfoutz and Cohen, p. 243.

[2]Holt, p. 26.

business and industry collection is probably the abstracts, indexes, and bibliographies that provide access to serials and other literature. Pfoutz and Cohen state:

> A library which gives service to industry must have as many of these tools available as it can afford. The major searching guides should be available in even the smallest collections. Where special subject interests exist, the more specialized abstract services will be needed.[1]

Another type of material extremely useful to business and industry is directories. Valuable directories include telephone directories for the immediate vicinity and large cities throughout the world, and trade, industrial, and company directories.

Other possibilities for inclusion in the collection are: corporation annual reports; business, investment, and tax services; technical research and development reports; patents; standards and specifications; trade catalogs; maps; pamphlets; literature guides, and monographs and textbooks. Government documents, including census material and statistical reports, will form an important part of the collection.

Many general reference materials will also be needed and should be part of, or close to, the business and industry collection. These include dictionaries, atlases, almanacs, handbooks, and encyclopedias. In Business Infor-

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[1]Pfoutz and Cohen, p. 245.

mation Sources, Daniells lists a number of essential works, comprehensive in coverage, that should comprise a basic bookshelf for a library serving business.[1]

Not to be forgotten are newspaper clippings and other file materials, and films, records, and tapes for the audio-visual collection.

The library should try to purchase multiple copies of the most important circulating books, so they will be available to the businessman when he needs them. This, of course, will put an added strain on the materials budget, which must be devoted to a large extent to paying for continuations. And business and science/technology serials are, unfortunately, unusually expensive.

Once the business and industry collection is assembled, the staff must be alert to keep it up-to-date and pertinent to the continuing needs of the economic community. A small but current collection is more useful than one full of deadwood.

Reference and Other Special Services

Reference services

According to Holt, "the way to the heart - or at least the attention - of the businessman is through improved

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[1]Daniells, p. 351-355.

reference services. Large reading collections alone - regardless of how pertinent they may be - do not seem to hold the same attention."[1]

One of the reference activities most favored by businessmen, no doubt because it is quick and saves a trip to the library, is telephone reference. Virtually all public libraries provide this service, but a surprisingly large percentage of the public is not aware of this. The respondents to the Meyer-Rostvolt study requested that telephone reference be publicized more, and that the public library also provide for the ordering of materials by telephone.[2]

Although almost all public libraries offer traditional reference service--the answering of specific factual questions--few are able to provide literature searches. Pfoutz and Cohen believe that public libraries with large collections of materials should

> give service in depth in order to fully exploit the value of those materials. There should be a searching and bibliographic service that goes beyond the quick reference check for a piece of actual information or verification of a bibliographic detail; ideally, it should approach the comprehensive-literature search. At the very least, a usable bibliography or list of references with brief annotations can be provided to answer many requests.[3]

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[1]Holt, p. 214.

[2]Meyer and Rostvolt, p. 74.

[3]Pfoutz and Cohen, p. 253.

Because of the amount of staff time and skill required for literature searching, the library might have to charge a fee for this service. Fee service is discussed in Chapter VI of this paper.

Public libraries that are unable to perform literature searches will often refer patrons to someone, such as a free-lance librarian, who can.

The scanning and routing of appropriate material of interest was another reference service specifically requested by some respondents to the Meyer-Rostvolt survey.[1] This also is an expensive service that might require the charging of fees.

However, public libraries can provide a valuable current awareness service to businessmen by circulating contents lists, or photocopies of the contents pages of periodicals. This service can be provided rapidly and fairly cheaply, according to Kenneth D. C. Vernon. The library should be sure the periodicals covered by the contents list service are the ones library users want to see. Therefore, before the service is started, users with varying information needs should be consulted about which periodicals they want to scan.[2]

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[1]Meyer and Rostvolt, p. 57.

[2]"Special Services of Business Libraries," in Campbell, p. 143.

A library that circulates contents lists should probably offer the back up service of photocopying requested articles.

Obtaining information and materials from outside the library is an essential element of service to business and industry. Since no library can supply all the information businessmen need, the information must be obtained wherever it is available--from another library, an organization, government agency, or individual. This service was also requested by respondents to the Meyer-Rostvolt survey.[1]

Other special services

A special service provided by some public libraries is a consultation service to assist in establishing or operating company libraries. However, most public librarians do not have the training or expertise for this work. They can help, however, by compiling bibliographies on the subject and making sure that the materials listed in the bibliographies are available. Or they may refer the companies to the Special Libraries Association, which maintains a limited consultation service.

Sometimes public libraries need to relax their rules and regulations in order to serve business and industry better. The rules pertaining to borrowers' cards might

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[1]Holt, p. 16.

be relaxed to allow the issuance of cards to local firms or to their non-resident employees. The library could restrict the materials so borrowed to adult non-fiction, if desired. Another way restrictions are sometimes relaxed is to allow usually non-circulating materials, such as reference books and periodicals, to go out of the library for a short time.

A charge account for photocopying, and mail delivery of materials, would probably be greatly appreciated by members of the economic community.

Other services, such as the production of bibliographies and accessions lists, will be described in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

PUBLICIZING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY SERVICES

A public library may have an extensive collection of materials of interest to business and industry. It may have a well-trained staff, and well-thought-out services for the economic community. But if the members of that community do not know these things are available, they will not use them.

Many people still think of public libraries as sources of leisure reading and are simply not aware of the commercial and technical resources available there. As a result, scientists and engineers do without informaton freely available in the public library, and "thousands of small businesses fail each year, many of them because they ignore management methods such as are discussed in materials to be found on library shelves."[1]

Therefore, it is essential that public library services to business and industry be publicized. With the development of commercial information services, such publicity becomes even more important if the public library

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[1]George N. Odiorm, "Small Business Beware," Dun's Review & Modern Industry 78 (July 1961), quoted in Wheeler and Goldhor, p. 351.

is to have a future as an information resource.

There are numerous methods of publicizing public library services. One of the most traditional is the production of special publications, such as accessions lists, newsletters, bibliographies, and brochures describing library services. Other means of gaining publicity include: posters, the mass media, house organ articles, personal contacts, programs, tours, and participation in exhibitions sponsored by other groups.

Library Publications

Accessions lists, newsletters, bibliographies and brochures may be distribued by direct mail, handed out at meetings, or available for pick-up at locations where business people congregate. Names for the mailing list can be obtained through the staff's study of local businesses and industries, the Chamber of Commerce, professional organizations, service organizations, and business schools. They can even be purchased from commercial firms, suggests the Business Reference Services Committee of the American Library Association's Reference and Adult Services Division (RASD).[1]

Newsletters, brochures, and other materials pro-

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[1]"Publicizing Library Service to Business," RQ 13 (Spring 1974): 239.

duced by the public library should be attractive and "professional" appearing if they are to catch and hold the attention of businessmen. They should not be produced by equipment such as mimeographs and spirit duplicators. A library might want to establish and operate its own small duplications shop in order to produce good-looking publications and avoid the expense and delays of using commercial printers.

An attractive format can be achieved by designing unusual covers, using a variety of type fronts, and using colored inks and paper. "Establishing an attractive format is only partially dependent upon money. Much can be accomplished through creative use of the equipment, talent, and techniques available in even a modest situation."[1]

Brochures

Brochures, especially, need eye-appeal so the public will pick them up and actually read them. Their layout should permit the quick location of information, and their message should be succinct.

Accessions Lists

The purpose of accessions lists is to tell users of the library about new publications added to the collection during a specified period of time. Accessions lists may

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[1]Holt, p. 137.

be comple or selective, and they may be arranged by subject or author. Full bibliographic details, or even annotations, may be provided for each item on the list.

Vernon points out that the production of accessions lists has become a habit for many libraries. He suggests that the practice be questioned from time to time and alternatives, such as library bulletins, be considered.[1]

Newsletters

A library newsletter or bulletin provides a valuable way of communicating with regular and potential library users and staff members. It tells them what is going on in the library--new programs or services, materials added, changes in policy or staff, hours of operation, and special features of the business and industry division. It may also provide staff-written abstracts or reviews of new books, pamphlets, and articles, or brief bibliographies of timely topics.

Bibliographies

Bibliographies of materials from a library's own collection are a way of presenting members of the economic community with real evidence that the public library has materials of interest to them. They may be prepared on

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[1]Vernon, p. 137.

topics of particular interest to the library's clientele, or focus on subjects of current interest. A short bibliography of recent publications on a subject that has suddenly become topical will probably answer numerous inquiries.[1]

Posters

Posters are an effective way of advertising business and industry services both inside and outside the library. If the posters measure about ten by fourteen inches, they can easily be mailed to companies for display on their bulletin boards. Colors and messages should be varied for long-term appeal.

Mass Media

Staff-written newspaper articles are a traditional way of publicizing public libraries, but sometimes these articles are condensed, placed in an inconspicuous part of the paper, or published too late to be effective. It may help to become personally acquainted with the newspaper's business editor. Appropriate subjects for staff-written articles include business and industry services and special events, and reviews of books in the collection.

Radio stations and television channels are required to

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[1]Ibid., p. 145.

provide a certain number of hours per week of public service announcements. The public library with staff time and talent to write clever spot announcements can take advantage of this free advertising.

Another use of radio and television is the production of special programs by library staff members. For example, the business librarian at the Tri-County Regional Library, Rome, Georgia, produced and moderated the video production "Minding Your Own Business." The half-hour program was cablecast weekly in Rome and two other cities. A different topic and guest were featured each week. Issues covered included consumer affairs, student financial aid, and benefits for the elderly.[1]

House Organs and Newsletters

Many companies, trade organizations, and professional groups are happy to print articles about public library business and industry services in their newsletters or house organs. A systematic approach to this source of publicity is to make a comprehensive list of such publications in the area, with relevant publication data for each, and send articles to them regularly.

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[1]Ann N. Russell, "Tri-County Regional Library Serves Special Needs of Business Community," Georgia Librarian, 17 (February 1980): 10.

Personal Contact

Of all ways of publicizing public library business and industry services, personal contact between library staff members and businessmen in one of the most effective. There is no substitute for such demonstrated interest in meeting the businessman's own specialized needs. Furthermore, it offers an opportunity to receive input on how the library can improve its services. Personal contact also increases staff enthusiasm for serving the economic community.

Speaking to groups

Many potential users are reached at one time when staff members talk to groups about library services. Appropriate groups to speak to include Chambers of Commerce, professional and trade associations, labor oragniza tions, service clubs, civic clubs, and groups of employees within a firm. Visual aids, such as films or slides, will make the talk more effective. This is an opportunity to hand out library publications, such as brochures about business and industry services.

Joining organizations

Another way of making personal contacts is for staff members to join and participate in local business organiza-

tions. Staff members can then relate the library's resources to the organization's activities. For example, the director of the Farmers Branch, Texas, Public Library attends meetings of the local Business Chamber of Commerce and participates in its "Information Exchange," during which she is able to relate library materials to business needs.[1]

The RASD's Business Reference Division suggest that libraries encourage staff members to join organizations by paying their dues and giving them time off to attend meetings.[2]

Visitation Programs

Personal visits to local companies are a time-consuming, but rewarding, way of making contacts. In an experimental project, staff members of the Pomona Public Library personally visited local companies to explain the library's business and industry services. The visitors also presented the businessmen with printed brochures about business and industry services, and brief bibliographies on subjects of interest to them. This "visitation" program

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[1]Dallas County Library Association Newsletter, November 1981, p. 2.

[2]"Publicizing Library Service," p. 240.

is explained in detail in Holt, Chapter VIII.[1]

Library Programs

Programs of interest to businessmen not only publicize the business and industry service, they actually get businessmen into the library. Local firms and organizations will often co-sponsor such programs. Holding the programs at lunch time and encouraging participants to bring a sack lunch may help increase attendance.

Tours

Library orientation talks and tours also bring potential users of business and industry services into the library. A tour would probably be most effective if the group in attendance had some homogenity, such as a professional organization. Then the staff member conducting the tour could zero in on the materials and services of particular interest to that group.

Exhibitions

Participation in exhibitions sponsored by industries or other groups can be a valuable source of publicity. For example, libraries from three states cooperated in staffing a booth at an International Textile Exhibition

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[1]Holt, pp. 92-115.

(ITEX) in Greenville, South Carolina. Purpose of the booth was to show people in the textile industry that libraries have information services to offer the business community.[1]

Libraries might also consider setting up similar booths at state and county fairs.

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[1]"Highlighting Libraries at Business Expo.," American Libraries 6 (March 1975): 147.

CHAPTER VI

COOPERATION AND FEE SERVICE: TWO WAYS TO HELP MEET THE COSTS

Offering expensive materials and specialized services to business and industry places a heavy financial burden on public libraries. They need to find all possible means of reducing or defraying costs. Two ways of doing this are entering into cooperative agreements with other libraries, and charging user fees.

Library Cooperation

Service to business and industry can be improved without greatly increasing costs through participation in library cooperative networks or systems. Systems and networks may be organized on the local, regional, state, or national level. Many are multi-type, i.e., they include public, academic, school, and special libraries.

Librarians also often cooperate through informal networks based on professional courtesy and personal acquaintance.

Cooperative activities that benefit public library service to business and industry include:

Resource sharing. These agreements make the materials

of all participating libraries available to users of each member library. This permits even the smallest library to provide all kinds of information on the local level through its access to the resources of larger libraries.

Cooperative acquisitions. In cooperative acquisitions agreements, the responsibility for acquisition of materials in designated subject areas is assigned to each participating library. This results in a greater concentration of materials in each field than would be possible if each library acquired materials independently. As far as possible, subjects for acquisition should be assigned according to the profiles of each library's economic community.

Sharing costs of expensive services. Libraries can join together to share the cost of providing expensive services, such as on-line data base searching, which many would not be able to afford individually.

Joint reference service. By consolidating services, public libraries can provide optimum reference service and can hire reference librarians with various specialities.

Publicity. Publicity is another area that lends itself well to cooperation. Production of publications, displays, and other items needed by the public information program is more efficient if centralized. Joint ownership

of equipment and pooling of staff skills saves money and time.

Staff training. Even small libraries can offer in-service training to their staff members by participating in cooperative training programs with other libraries. Skills that might be taught in such programs include materials selection, specialized reference work, and planning library programs for businessmen.

Fee Service

To meet the information needs of business and industry, public libraries must acquire additional staff and specialized resources. They need to, in effect, provide "special library" services. Since such service is over and above that usually supplied to other segments of the community, it seems reasonable that business and industry should help bear some of the cost.

The economic community does often contribute money and materials to libraries that serve them. However, these contributions and other traditional funding sources are usually inadequate to pay for technology-intensive or time-consuming highly specialized services. A number of public libraries have become convinced that the only way they can afford to provide such services is to charge for them.

Many librarians oppose the charging of fees because

they believe this is contrary to the tradition of free public library service. However, others argue that user fees are fair because they require the individual who benefits from extensive research or high-cost computer services to pay the extra cost for this service.

Furthermore, fee service is advantageous to the economic community. It is often less expensive for a firm to pay a fee for service than to invest in the facilities, materials, and staff required to do the work itself.

Today more and more libraries are adding online searching to their services; many have decided they must charge for this. Some libraries are also beginning to offer reference services for a fee.

Among the latter are the Pasadena and Houston Public Libraries. Pasadena charges an annual subscription fee for its monthly newsletter, Business Briefs, which contains abstracts of articles of interest to the business community. Houston offers specialized reference services through its Business Information Service on a reimbursement basis. In 1975 the fee was $15 per hour. Products and services offered include preparation of special bibliographies and reports, literature searches, abstracts of journal articles, photocopied materials, and "individualized" counseling on infor-

mation needs.[1]

The prototype of public library fee-based research service is probably INFORM, a program begun by four Minnesota libraries in 1972. INFORM provides custom designed library research to business and industry for a fee of $18 per hour. The participating libraries are the Minneapolis Public Library, St. Paul Public Library, James J. Hill Reference Library, and the University of Minnesota Library. Cooperation between the libraries is limited to promotional activities; each library implements the rest of the program autonomously.[2]

According to Zella J. Shannon of the Minneapolis Public Library:

> INFORM aims to put the information resources of the library at the disposal of the user beyond the traditional terms of public library service . . . .
>
> Primarily the difference [between INFORM and traditional reference service] is that the information sought demands more exhaustive, diligent and protracted investigation requiring the examination, evaluation, and summation of information obtained not only from written sources, but also from nonprint media, individuals, and organizations.[3]

The librarian assigned to the project becomes, in a

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[1]"Service to Business: the Fee Question," Library Journal 100 (15 June 1975): 1182.

[2]Zella J. Shannon, "Public Library Service to the Cooporate Community," Special Libraries 65 (January 1974): 12-16.

[3]Ibid., p. 13.

way, a temporary employee of the company purchasing the service. Visits are made and materials delivered to the customer's office. Bibliographies may be prepared or formal reports written, if requested. All work is kept confidential.

Information-on-demand services such as INFORM provide a new way for public libraries to grow and develop, and to remain viable.

Conclusion

Businesses and industrial concerns need a tremendous amount of information in order to succeed. Even if they have company libraries, they cannot provide all of this information themselves. Public libraries can contribute to the economic health of their communities and of the nation by helping to supply this information.

Service to business and industry should be based on a study of the economic community. The study should determine what kinds of materials and services are most needed by the firms within that community.

One of the most important elements of this service is publicity to inform the economic community of the many resources the public library has to offer.

The main qualification staff members should have is a genuine desire to be of service. They also need back-

ground subject knowledge and well-developed reference skills, but these can be learned on the job, if necessary.

The most difficult problem to be solved regarding business and industry service is how to pay for it. The materials and services required are highly specialized and expensive, while funding for many libraries is declining. Library cooperative activities and contributions from the economic sector help. But it may be necessary to charge fees for computer-based and time-consuming specialized services. Several public libraries have begun to offer custom-designed service for a fee. This development offers the potential for improved service to business and industry and a new direction in which public libraries can grow.

APPENDIX

IMPROVEMENTS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES SUGGESTED BY MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Improve the Collections.....46%
- More business-related or management books
- Better technical collections
- More on economics and market research
- Larger document collection
- Back runs of journals and newspapers
- Patents, standards, specifications
- More reference books, especailly directories
- Industrial and training films

Publicize Activities.....22%
- Send out mailings of various kinds
- Have informative displays for businessmen
- Have orientation programs for businessmen

Expand Reference Services.....16%
- Obtain material from other sources
- Continue telephone reference
- Perform literature searches
- Scan, route, current awareness services

Add Special Services..... 5%
- Accept telephone orders
- Provide mail and direct van delivery

Miscellaneous.....11%
- Issue borrower's cards to firms
- Inexpensive photocopying service
- Provide pleasant and helpful assistance

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